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Memorandum to the Government of the United States on the Recognition of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

by
Basil Batchinsky

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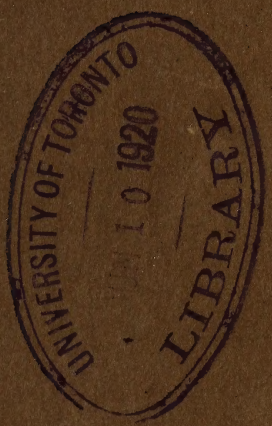

WASHINGTON, D. C.
1920

Memorandum to the Government of the United States on the Recognition of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

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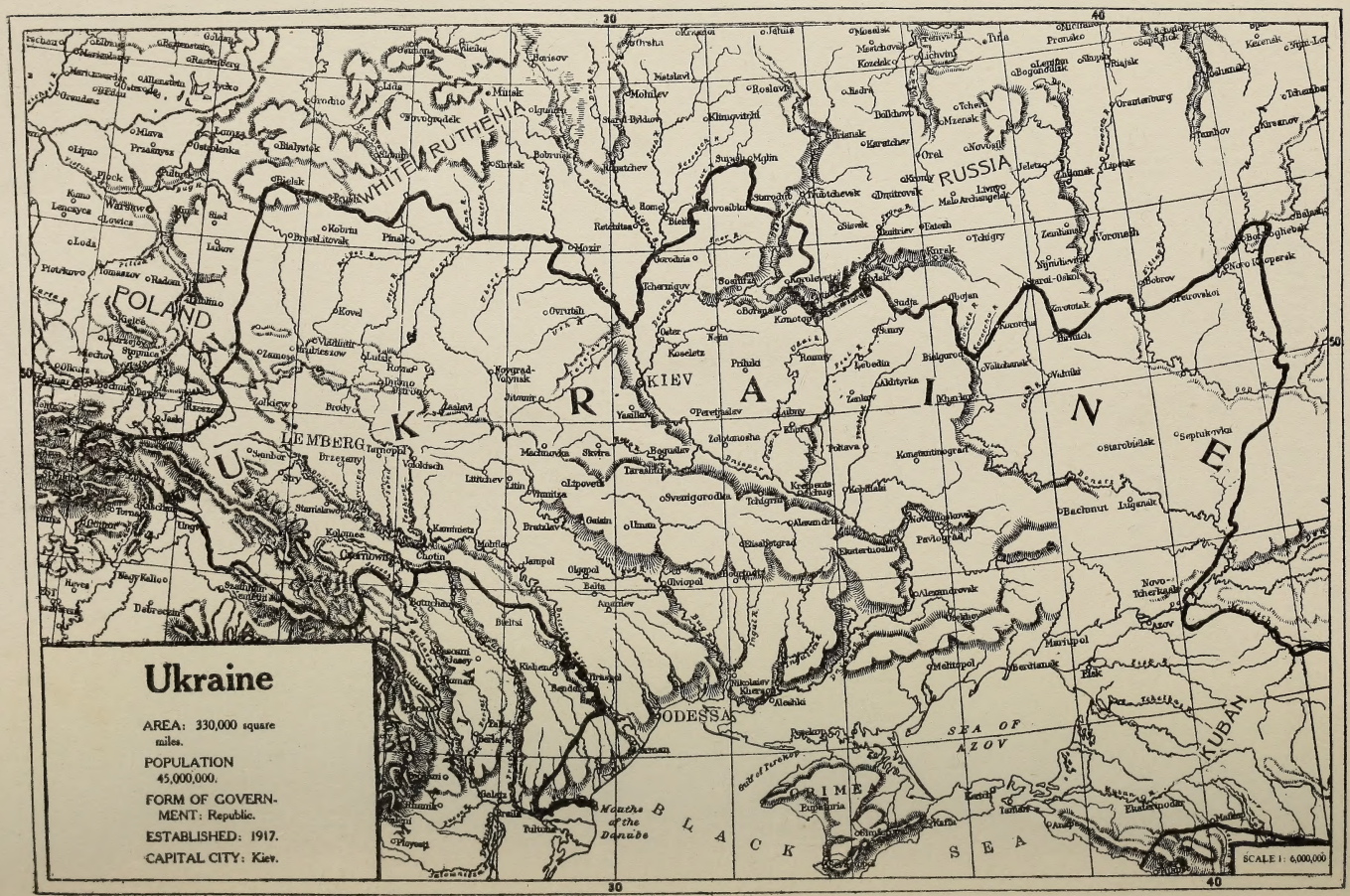
Ukraine
AREA: 330,000 square miles.
POPULATION 45,000,000.
FORM OF GOVERNMENT: Republic.
ESTABLISHED: 1917.
CAPITAL CITY: Kiev.
WHITE RUTHENIA
POLAND
RUSSIA
KIEV
LEMBERG
ODESSA
CRIMEA
SEA OF AZOV
BLACK SEA
KUBAN
Mouths of the Danube
SCALE 1: 6,000,000

UKRAINIAN MISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 12, 1920.

The Honorable, The Secretary of State,
Department of State, Washington.

Sir:

In view of the present status in eastern Europe, and in deference to the unsettled affairs of the territory of the former Russian empire, which are now pressing for a definite solution, I, as the representative of the Government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, conceive it to be my duty to submit for your consideration this memorandum setting forth the just claims of the Ukrainian people to political and economic independence. As a consequence of the facts herein explained, I respectfully ask the Government of the United States of America to extend recognition to the Ukrainian People's Republic as a free state.

The national aspirations of Ukraine embrace political liberation for all Ukrainians, consolidation of all free Ukrainians into one state, the erection of a constitutional democratic republic, and economic co-operation with neighboring and other states.

Ukraine's claim to independence is based upon the following principal grounds:

(1) The existence of the Ukrainians as a well-defined, separate, group-conscious race, with a continuous historic and cultural tradition;

(2) Their occupation, over a period of centuries, of the lands where they now dwell;

(3) Their age-long efforts, increasingly of popular origin, to achieve and maintain political independence;

(4) The obvious interest and desire of the entire Ukrainian population to organize and sustain its economic life free of exploitation by neighbors and foreign powers; and

(5) The crying need for a new order in eastern Europe, and the permanent elimination of the historic struggle between Poland and Russia to control the natural resources of Ukraine.

By all the canons of ethnology and history, the Ukrainians form a distinct racial unit. In America there has been a popular impression that Ukraine is merely a province of Russia, identified with it linguistically and racially. This is a misapprehension. The leading anthropologists, even among the Russians, agree that the Ukrainians constitute a physical type clearly different from the Great Russians, the White Ruthenians or the Poles. In culture and temperament they display peculiarities which permeate their whole social and moral nature. Their language is a separate Slavic tongue, and not merely a dialect of the Great Russian.

"Between Ukrainians and Russians," says Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, a learned student of Russia, "there are profound differences of language, customs, traditions, domestic arrangements, mode of life and communal organizations. Indeed, if I did not fear to ruffle unnecessarily the patriotic susceptibilities of my Great Russian friends who have a pet theory, I should say that we have here two distinct nationalities. . . ."

"The historic development," says the official statement of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences,

"contributed toward the creation of two nationalities: the Great Russian and the Ukrainian. The historic life of the two peoples failed to develop a common language for them. On the contrary, it really strengthened those dialectic variances with which the ancestors of the Ukrainians, on the one hand, and those of the Great Russians, on the other, made their appearance in history. And, of course, the living Great Russian idiom, as it is spoken by the people of Moscow, Riazan, Archangel, Yaroslavl or Novgorod cannot be called a 'Pan-Russian' language as opposed to the Ukrainian of Poltava, Kiev or Lviv (Lemberg)."

The Ukrainian race is as nearly autocthonous as any in central or eastern Europe. A brief survey of history shows that, for more than one thousand years, the Ukrainians and their forbears have continued to occupy approximately the same lands which they now inhabit, except for temporary recessions and re-colonizations caused by Mongol invasions. In the ninth century they were already settled in the vast and fertile plains and woodlands lying between the Carpathian Mountains and the Sea of Azov, and embracing the valleys of the Dniester, Pruth, Boh, Dnieper and Donetz.

Organized government in Ukraine began with the ancient state of Kiev. The ascendancy of Kiev also marks the period of Ukraine's greatest political expansion. From the ninth to the thirteenth century, Kiev was the center of the economic, intellectual and political life of eastern Europe, uniting the entire ethnographic Ukrainian territories. The name by which this state was known was "Russ," taken from the name of the reigning dynasty. This term was later appropriated by the Great Russians. "Because of the Byzantine commerce, learning and craft," observes the Polish historian Zakrzewski, "Kiev, the 'mother of

Russ cities,' was for the Poland of the eleventh and twelfth centuries what Rome had been for earlier Germans.'' The French geographer Reclus notices that academies flourished at Kiev and Ostrog before the Great Russians owned a single high school, and draws attention to the fact that Russia, during the regenerative period of Peter the Great, received her teachers from Ukraine.

The fall of Kiev and Ukraine's subsequent loss of autonomous statehood in the fourteenth century can only be ascribed to the old system of military conquest. The affairs of eastern Ukraine became confused and decadent through the constant Mongol pressure which began in the thirteenth century. One hundred years later, part of western Ukraine also, weakened by frequent Tatar invasions, fell a prey to Poland, to whom she was a tempting prize because of her rich soil.

The Polish conquest of Ukraine started in 1340 and, after thirty-five years of the bitterest warfare, the Poles succeeded in annexing an area of land approximately coextensive with the present provinces of Kholm and Eastern Galicia. This they never succeeded in assimilating, in spite of the most tremendous efforts. Simultaneously Volhynia and other northern Ukrainian territories became confederated with Lithuania in order to gain protection against the Tatars. The marriage of the Lithuanian king to the Queen of Poland and the union of the two realms drew these Ukrainian lands also in 1386 into an informal union with the Polish empire which, in 1569, in spite of Ukrainian protests, was made definite, and lasted until 1648.

In that year the whole Ukrainian people rose, under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnitsky, and put an end to this union, which was incompatible with their interests and with their type of civilization. Then, antici-

pating further Polish efforts to destroy the newly won independence of Ukraine, and menaced by other foes, particularly the Turks, then the strongest military power in eastern Europe, the Ukrainians concluded an agreement of confederation with the Czar of Muscovy in 1654. It is interesting to recall that Khmelnitsky was expressly advised against this step by Oliver Cromwell, who declared that the Czar would never permanently recognize a free people.

The most important clauses in the treaty of 1654 guaranteed a freely chosen supreme head for the Ukrainian state, called a "hetman"; the right to engage in diplomatic relations with other states, except Poland and Turkey, when the cognizance of the Czar was necessary; free trade with all foreign nations; the complete independence of the judicial system; the right to choose a leader for the army, over whom the "hetman" had supreme control; and, lastly, the independence of the Ukrainian Church.

Muscovy did not live up to these terms, and the result was a succession of Ukrainian uprisings, directed now against Russia just as they had formerly been aimed at Poland. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Russia and Poland made common cause and partitioned Ukraine, making the Dnieper the frontier between their two empires. The most important rebellion against this last measure was that led by Mazeppa in 1709, which was quelled by Peter the Great. After the time of Mazeppa, Russia's policy of repression was pursued openly and ruthlessly. Peter instituted a supervision over the autonomous Ukrainian administration, vesting authority in Muscovite officers, through whose hands passed everything pertaining to the hetman's chancellery. In 1722 the power of the hetmans was cut down to nothing. In 1764 Catherine II. abolished the office altogether.

Meanwhile, in order to assure possession of Ukraine, the Russian government was making every effort to assimilate the Ukrainian people. One step toward accomplishing this was the suppression of Ukrainian literature. In 1720 a special censorship over the publication of Ukrainian books was established in Kiev. In 1769 even the printing of Ukrainian primers was forbidden, and Russian text-books were introduced in spite of the protests of Ukrainian educators.

Step by step, national feeling was stifled in Ukraine. In 1775, the "Zaporogian Sitch," the last bulwark of Ukraine's autonomy, and the basis of the Ukrainian Army, was destroyed. In 1783 the peasants of Ukraine, free since 1648, when they had thrown off Polish domination, were again subjected by the Russian government to serfdom in its most cruel form. Hundreds of thousands of free peasants and Cossacks, together with millions of acres of Ukrainian land, were distributed among the favorites of Catherine II.

This measure had the effect of crushing the resistance to Russification among the Ukrainian nobility, and estranged them from the common people. The serfdom of the small farmer was so profitable for the gentry that the preponderance of the aristocracy became superfically Russian. Under pressure of Russian schooling, administration and military service, they adopted the Russian language and political ideas. To achieve this desirable result, the Muscovite government did not hestitate to persecute ruthlessly anything that could be held as a reminder of the republican régime in Ukraine. At the same time, an analogous Polonization of the upper classes was being carried out in western Ukraine. The last quarter of the century witnessed a temporary eclipse of the Ukrainian spirit of nationalism.

The French Revolution released forces that had been imprisoned in the hearts and minds of the people. A wave of nationalistic feeling swept through Europe, bringing inspiration to the Slavs as well as to their western brothers. Every branch of the Slavic race awoke to a realization of its history, its traditions and its great men. The Ukrainians shared in this renaissance. Between the revived nationalism and the spirit of democracy a natural alliance presently sprang up. Especially in the Dnieper district, there began an enthusiastic study of the country's history, and a perusal of old documents and popular traditions. The keenest interest was manifested in everything pertaining to ethnography, philology and popular culture. It was the tardy recognition of the people as guardians of national culture which did much to break down the lack of sympathy which had so long prevailed between the nobles and the lower classes.

But the Ukrainian movement was confronted by a bitterly hostile Russophile bureaucracy. It is remarkable that Russo-Ukrainian policies should have remained so static from the time of Peter the Great onward, while a number of changes were taking place in Russo-Polish relations. Yet such was the case. The Ukrainian language was restricted time and again. Ukrainian economic life was hampered in several ways. The Ukrainian serfs, upon their liberation in 1861, had been granted smaller allotments than the Russian serfs. This resulted in overpopulation of the agricultural districts, emigration and a high death rate. The lack of schools made remote the possibility of improving farming methods. Ukrainian industry suffered a set-back through the unfavorable tariff policies adhered to by the Russian government and by the fact that no banks, except those with central offices in Moscow or Petrograd, were allowed to establish branches in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the nineteenth century witnessed a notable growth of Ukrainian national feeling. The early years of the century constitute the period of literary rebirth. Then followed the educational work among the common people. Private schools were organized, and pamphlets and books were distributed. Cultural organizations were formed, and a pronounced interest in science was displayed. This entire revival so alarmed the Russian government that, in 1878, the Czar prohibited by ukase almost all publications in the Ukrainian language. Still, the literary impulse was not suppressed. It transferred itself to Eastern Galicia and Switzerland and, in spite of grave obstacles, succeeded in winning for the Ukrainian a worthy place among Slavonic literatures.

Side by side with the cultural advance, a political reawakening of the Ukrainian people was taking place. It was appreciated by the Ukrainians that political liberty for their land and race was expressly conditioned upon the overthrow of the Czarist government. Accordingly they bent their efforts in that direction. Ukrainians organized and took a leading part in the Decembrist uprising of 1825. In the subsequent revolutionary movement they were again prominent, and two-thirds of the leaders were natives of Ukraine. The events of March, 1917, were largely made possible by the Ukrainian regiments stationed in Petrograd, who refused any further allegiance to the Romanovs and became supporters of the newly created authorities. Later on, the Ukrainians were the first of the subject nations of the Russian empire to organize their own government. On November 20, 1917, Ukraine was proclaimed an independent nation by the Central Rada, the provisional Ukrainian parliament. The struggle to win recognition for this independence is still in progress.

The expediency of Ukraine's claim to exist as a self-governing nation does not, however, rest merely upon racial, ethnological and historical bases. There are primary economic considerations which press for its admittance to the circle of free nations.

The Ukrainian people inhabit a land 330,000 square miles in extent, with a population of 45,000,000. This territory is not merely abundantly self-supporting, but is, in fact, one of the richest areas on the earth's surface. Four-fifths of the entire extent lie within a belt of deep, black earth, which produces bounteous crops of wheat, barley, rye, oats, sugar-beets, fruit, tobacco and vegtables. Under the Ukrainian ethnographic territory lie mineral riches: coal, petroleum, iron, manganese, salt, phosphate, kaolin, graphite and many other substances of commercial value.

In the normal pre-war period, Ukraine used to supply about 5,000,000 tons of grain for export annually. Most of this was wheat. The last three years, particularly 1919, have seen good harvests in Ukraine. At the present moment, when western Europe is unable to feed herself, Ukraine has an excess remaining from the crops of 1917, 1918 and 1919, to an amount of not less than 10,000,000 tons of different kinds of grain. Besides this, the country can guarantee a minimum yearly export of 300,000 to 600,000 tons of sugar; 9,000 tons of tobacco; 17,000 tons of sugar-beet seeds; and 10,000 tons of flax and hemp yarn. Besides these products, Ukraine used to export annually before the war: 65,000 tons of eggs; 6,500 tons of raw hides; 12,000 tons of pork and dressed poultry; 9,000 tons of beef; 240,000 head of beef cattle; 15,000 head of horses; 130,000 hogs; and large quantities of wool, feathers and hops.

In minerals, Ukraine may export in a short time as

much as 100,000 tons of manganese ore annually; 500,000 tons of iron ore; and considerable amounts of phosphates, salt and soda. With reorganization of transportational facilities, she can furnish from 6,000,000 to 10,000,000 tons of coal and coke, as well as benzol toluol, anthracen phenol, naphthalin and other valuable coal tar derivatives; about 90,000 tons of coal tar; sulphuric acid, ammonium salts and many other raw and semi-manufactured products.

The preceding enumeration of the physical resources of Ukraine shows how mistaken is the conception that Ukraine could not maintain an economic existence independent of Russia. If a country possessing such extraordinary natural advantages and wealth as Ukraine cannot stand alone, how can one justify the independence of Italy, Greece, Poland, Jugoslavia, Finland and other European nations whose right to autonomy is not questioned, but whose natural endowments are far less favorable to economic freedom.

The converse of the same proposition; viz., that Russia cannot live without Ukraine, will not survive impartial criticism. Although it is quite clear that, in reasoning to this end, other interests than those of Ukraine supervene, it is nevertheless worth while to examine this point of view in order to expose its falsity.

The three fundamental bases of opposition usually advanced are: (1) Ukraine is the granary of Russia and is necessary to Russia for a large part of her food supply; (2) Ukraine separates Russia from the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, thereby closing the outlet to the Mediterranean; (3) Ukraine possesses a supply of coal and iron which is necessary to Russia.

The first objection is refuted by an examination of statistics. Figures for the years previous to the war

show consistently that Ukraine's exportations of cereals to other parts of the Russian empire did not reach more than 10 to 15% of her total export; i. e., about 36,000,000 bushels annually. Nearly all of this was destined for Poland, Lithuania and White Ruthenia. Russia proper never consumed more than a very small fraction of Ukraine's grain. She did not need it then and will not need it in the future. She is virtually self-sustaining in cereals, and the small surplus needed can readily be obtained from the fields of Siberia and the region of the Volga.

The second allegation, that Russia needs the Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, is readily disposed of by a reference to Russian maritime experience. The official Russian statistics of the traffic of merchandise by rail show no southern port which served as an outlet for the products of the territories situated north of the ethnic frontier of Ukraine, with the single exception of Rostov-on-the-Don. Novorossiysk was the port used by the Ukrainian Cossacks of Kuban and the northern Caucasus. Up to the present time, Russia proper has depended almost exclusively upon the Baltic ports. By special treaties with the new Baltic states, Russia is assuring herself a continued use of their ports. There is no reason why, if it should appear necessary and advisable, a similar conciliatory agreement with Ukraine could not arrange for a common use of the Black Sea ports.

With regard to Ukraine's coal resources, it is true that the Donetz basin furnished 70% of the total coal output of the former Russian empire, and the Donetz basin is mostly within the ethnographic limits of Ukraine. But it is also a fact that four-fifths of this coal was consumed in Ukraine itself, and that northwestern Russia and the Baltic provinces never used

the coal from the Donetz basin, because it could not compete in price with English or German coal. Furthermore, northern and central Russia are well supplied with wood and peat, and with coal from the vicinity of Moscow. Ukraine has very little wood or peat, and the exhaustion of the Donetz basin for the sake of Russian industries would leave her without fuel resources. The Urals and Siberia, too, are supplied with local coal, while in the Kuznetsky district in west Siberia are vast deposits, scarcely worked as yet because of the lack of railway lines into Siberia.

The iron fields of the Urals and of other provinces of Russia proper have not been extensively exploited, and before the war Ukraine did indeed furnish three-fourths of all the iron supply of the former Russian empire. But the beds of iron ore in Ukraine are not very large, and it would be erroneous to assume that they could adequately supply the needs of all Russia for any long period of time. In any case, it is safe to conclude that, if the metallurgical development of Russia is continued and her mines consistently worked, she will be entirely able to get along without iron imports from Ukraine.

Finally, there is no obstacle to permanent economic co-operation of Ukraine and Russia, and brisk commercial dealings between the two independent states. But political disentanglement is a first requisite. The richness of Ukraine has always made it a tempting region for exploitation by neighboring states. This is more than ever true today. If such exploitation is not to be carried on at the expense of and to the detriment of the Ukrainian people, a separate state organization is necessary to assume protection over their economic interests.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that a free

Ukraine does not imply an economically isolated Ukraine. Constant traffic with friendly foreign powers is desired by all the Ukrainian political parties. Ukraine lacks machinery, capital and trained experts. The railroad question is of enormous importance. Before the Revolution, all of the rail lines of Ukraine yielded considerable profits, especially those known as the Southwestern Railroads. But Russia did not see fit to use this income in the construction of further roads and, as a result, Ukraine possesses a very inconsiderable network of railroads: only about 11,115 miles. This is much less than the country needs. The war almost completely wrecked and demoralized even this inadequate transportational system. The railroads must be rebuilt, and the insufficiently developed public highways must be improved and extended. The regulation of navigable rivers is another matter of great importance, and the vast available power possibilities of the rapids of the Dnieper and other streams must be exploited. Central power stations must be erected, new methods introduced in mining, grain elevators built and agriculture, milling, sugar refining and other industries given an upward impetus by the application of scientific management and fresh capital.

Inability to contest the force of the foregoing historic and economic considerations has led certain foes of Ukrainian independence to make the assertion that the Ukrainian national movement is artificially stimulated and does not receive support from the masses of the population. This contention is controverted by the most obvious facts. For more than two years the Ukrainians have been actively fighting for their liberty, in spite of almost incredible obstacles. They have had no support from any foreign source in this struggle; they were attacked at one and the same time by

the Bolsheviki and anti-Bolsheviki; they were blockaded; they were unable to secure ammunition or sanitary supplies. They did not give up, because they realized that the question was one of life or death. No other nation in modern times has fought for its independence under such difficult circumstances, and none has expressed its desire for freedom more strongly. The plebiscite of blood is the most sincere evidence of the will to self-determination.

However, prolonged and stubborn fighting has not been the only way in which the Ukrainian people have shown their desire to be free. They have had several opportunities to manifest their wish in a more peaceful and regular manner. Thus, the Central Rada, which represented all classes of Ukrainians, and included in addition representatives of the various non-Ukrainian nationalities in the land, proclaimed Ukraine's independence in 1917. When, in December of the same year, the Bolshevik propagandists questioned the representative character of the Central Rada, a general congress of the workers and peasants of Ukraine was called, and this congress, chosen after the Bolshevik method, made haste to affirm its support of the Central Rada by a vote of 2,000 to 70. There was also in 1917 a formal election of deputies to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. Ukraine elected 230 deputies in all. Of those, 75% or 175 members, were Ukrainian nationalists.

After the overthrow of the pro-German Hetman Skoropadsky in 1918, and assumption of authority by the Directorate, even the Ukrainian communists declared themselves in favor of a free Ukraine and protested to the Russian Soviet Government against its proposed invasion. Their protest went unheeded, and when the Russian Bolsheviki occupied Kiev and en-

deavored to impose their system upon Ukraine, they found no Ukrainians who were willing to co-operate with them. The result was a so-called "Ukrainian Soviet Government," which is in reality anything but Ukrainian. The head is a Roumanian, Rakovsky, and the régime is nothing but a local agency of the Moscow government.

It is noteworthy that the Government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, headed by General Petlura, which I have the honor to represent, is the only government which the Ukrainian people have been willing to support. On the other hand, they have revolted against all foreign invaders who have attempted to impose their own rule upon the Ukrainians. The Germans, the Bolsheviki and the forces of General Denikin all met with vigorous resistance. If now the Polish forces are in Ukraine and the population does not oppose them, it is because the Poles are acting in conjunction with the Ukrainian forces under Petlura, as their allies.

It is also necessary to consider the opinion entertained in some circles that an independent Ukraine must inevitably fall under the influence of Germany and become a German outpost in eastern Europe. The reason generally advanced as a basis for this suspicion is that Ukraine concluded a separate peace with Germany in February, 1918, at Brest Litovsk. In this connection, it should be remembered that Roumania, too, concluded a separate peace with Germany. Yet Roumania has continued to be considered an ally of Germany's opponents, and it is everywhere recognized that she only negotiated with Germany because of the bitter fact that she was forced to do so. Ukraine was in far worse condition than Roumania when she concluded her peace with Germany. Roumania had at

least an organized state and a loyal army. Ukraine's government was in its infancy, its state organization was slight, and its army consisted chiefly of the remnants of the demoralized Russian forces. The Ukrainian leaders were faced by several wars; on the one hand by the war with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria; and now on the other, by the new conflict with the Russian Soviet Government. Under the circumstances, Ukraine had to choose between submitting entirely to the Bolsheviki, in which case the country would be over-run by Germans anyway, or making any kind of outright peace with Germany and then hoping for the best.

Subsequent events proved that Germany never had any interest in a permanently independent Ukraine. Toward the end of the war, she was in desperate need of foodstuffs. Today she wants, not merely foods, but also a new and fruitful field for banking, commercial exploitation and the sale of German goods. Germany has grown to consider eastern Europe as a natural market for her products. What she wants is a Greater Russia, whether it be Czarist, Bolshevist or Constitutional. Under the circumstances, it is more plausible to suspect the Germans of plotting to re-establish "Russia, one and indivisible," than to regard them as friendly to a free Ukraine.

At the present moment, the recognition of the Ukrainian People's Republic is a matter of international expediency, because there can be no peace in eastern Europe as long as Ukraine is subjected to any neighboring nation. Proposals to deal with the Ukrainian people as if they had no moral right to self-determination are an obvious contradiction to the principles enunciated by President Wilson at the time of America's entrance into the war against Germany

and her allies. The attempt to carry them into effect can only result in continued unrest in eastern Europe. The relegation of all Ukraine to Russia would mean at best the arbitrary compulsion of the Ukrainians to a federation which, if advisable, should come at their own instance and of their own free will; not because of outside pressure. At worst, it would renew their servitude. The partition of the country between Poland and Russia will not only produce continued restlessness and discontent within Ukraine itself, but will also continuously tempt Poland and Russia to make war on one another, in order to extend their respective spheres of influence. An independent Ukrainian state, on the contrary, would establish a balance of power in eastern Europe, which must be regarded as the surest guarantee of peace in that portion of the world.

The foregoing statement covers, in outline form, the main grounds upon which Ukraine bases her claim to independence. This memorandum is presented to you, Mr. Secretary, in the hope that the Ukrainian situation will be thoroughly examined, and it is my earnest belief that a careful study of Ukrainian affairs will sustain the request for recognition of the Ukrainian People's Republic which I have the honor herewith to submit.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

JULIAN BATCHINSKY,
Diplomatic Representative of the
Ukrainian People's Republic.

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